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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - International Terrorism -
Bali European Issues - Turkey
PARIS - Monday, October 03, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

International Terrorism - Bali
European Issues - Turkey

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The overwhelming majority of today's front pages anticipates on tomorrow's day of general strikes and devotes their lead stories to the degree of chaos commuters will be facing and to PM Villepin's first test of social unrest since taking office as Prime Minister. "Test by Fire" is the headline chosen by both economic papers Les Echos and La Tribune, while popular France Soir titles: "Villepin in the Eye of the Storm." Liberation headlines: "If It's Tuesday, It Must Be Conflict." Le Parisien headlines "Black Tuesday" and L'Humanite announces: "74 Percent of the French Support the Day of Protest." Le Figaro chooses to concentrate on the tug-of-war between Corsican unions and the government over the privatization of the SNCM Ferry company, always in light of a "a difficult social week" for the government.

Catholic La Croix differs with a front page and editorial devoted to "Europe's Hesitations Over Turkey." Editorialist Dominique Quinio suggests Europe needs to re-assess its own definition, while in Le Figaro political analyst Luc de Barochez concentrates on the "clandestine relationship between Paris and Ankara." (See Part C) Le Journal du Dimanche interviews former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing who reiterates his position: "I want Europe to establish high level and mutually satisfying relations with Turkey - as with Russia. These can be called a 'privileged partnership'. But inviting Turkey to participate in Europe's political institutions is not desirable."

The terrorist attack in Bali is the object of two editorials in Liberation and Le Figaro. While Liberation contends that international terrorism "has not achieved its objective of changing the West's habits" Le Figaro comments: "These attacks have nothing in common with attacks by al-Qaeda. Attacks from Jemaah Islamiyah are sporadic attacks on symbolic dates. They are acts of war." (See Part C)

An interview with Hamid Karzai in Le Figaro is titled: "Karzai: 'Unifying International Forces in Afghanistan.'" "Afghanistan continues to work hand in hand with the U.S. in the fight against terror. But the Bonn process is now over. Maybe we should consider giving our cooperation a political dimension. Fighting terrorism involves fighting against its financing and training in Afghanistan and neighboring countries. In time we will have a single command of the two operations underway in Afghanistan placed under the NATO banner."

Separately Le Figaro devotes a full page to France's new Rapid Reaction Force Headquarters, "where American officers will be welcomed with open arms" and the role France will be able to play in NATO operations. Arnaud de La Grange comments: "In the midst of the diplomatic guerrilla war over Iraq, achieving this feat was not easy. Pentagon civilians, like Rumsfeld, dragged their feet, while American generals appreciated France's growing military strength."

Left-of-center Liberation reports on a new transatlantic network, the "Committee for a Strong Europe" being developed in Washington by neo-conservatives of the PNAC think tank.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

International Terrorism - Bali

"The Asian Front"

Pierre Rousselin in right-of-center Le Figaro (10/03): "In Asia, the emerging middle class is engaged in a wild consumer race which goes hand in hand with the Westernization of its values. But the majority of the population cannot escape poverty and is the target of underground Islamization efforts. Indonesia is threatened by the Balkanization of its society."

Saturday's terrorist attack reminds us that terrorism does not target only the West and the Arab world. Asia, where the biggest changes are operating and where our future lies, is also a primary target. We must stop Al-Qaeda from fomenting anti-western resentment in this region of the world, so crucial for our survival. And the Indonesian authorities must be more determined in dealing with terrorists."

"In Vain"

Patrick Sabatier in left-of-center Liberation (10/03):
"Djihadists have no choice but to incessantly repeat their deadly attacks but with decreasing results. Their strategy and methods are well-known. Yet this mechanical repetition leads them nowhere. They have not managed to change the West's habits, to keep tourists away or to topple local regimes. Their propaganda has not awakened new martyrs among the Muslims. While we must not underestimate them, neither should we give in to the temptation of a 'war of civilizations' which the terrorists are trying in vain to provoke."

European Issues - Turkey

"Fragile Foundation"

Dominique Quinio in Catholic La Croix (10/03): "Until the end Europe will have been divided on Turkey. These last minute discussions illustrate the hesitations of many governments, not only Austria, and the reticence of many a public opinion on Turkey's EU membership, which is not a given. Many arguments are put forward against Turkey, including its position on the Armenian genocide and Cyprus. But many fear the membership of a Muslim country: without it being said, it is a fact that people fear Islam. The EU-25 has learned the hard way that Europe's expansion, if implemented too quickly and without consulting public opinion, exposes them to dangers. But mostly the questions surrounding Turkey's membership reveal Europe's psychological fragility: its foundation is not strong enough to absorb Turkey. If Europe were stronger, more united about a joint project, it would see Turkey's membership as a wonderful and peaceful challenge. Because Europe has not reached this point it needs more time. And so do the future potential candidates."

"The Clandestine Relationship Between Paris and Ankara"

Luc de Barochez in right-of-center Le Figaro (10/03): "Never has France's diplomacy been so out of tune with its public opinion. And rarely has France's foreign policy been decided by only one man, the President, as it is today. Is France encouraging the negotiations with Turkey in good faith? France continues to be Turkey's major ally within the EU. But like a forbidden relationship, the relationship between Ankara and Paris remains discreet. Chirac continues to believe that the West's interests, Europe's role in world affairs, and its relationship to Islam, will be better served with Turkey. Yet, officially, nothing is being stated. And Istanbul and Ankara do not appreciate this lack of clarity. Turkey's elite is distancing itself from a partner it no longer fully trusts. France's previous attitude towards Poland led to a loss of credit in Poland. The same could happen today with Turkey."
STAPLETON